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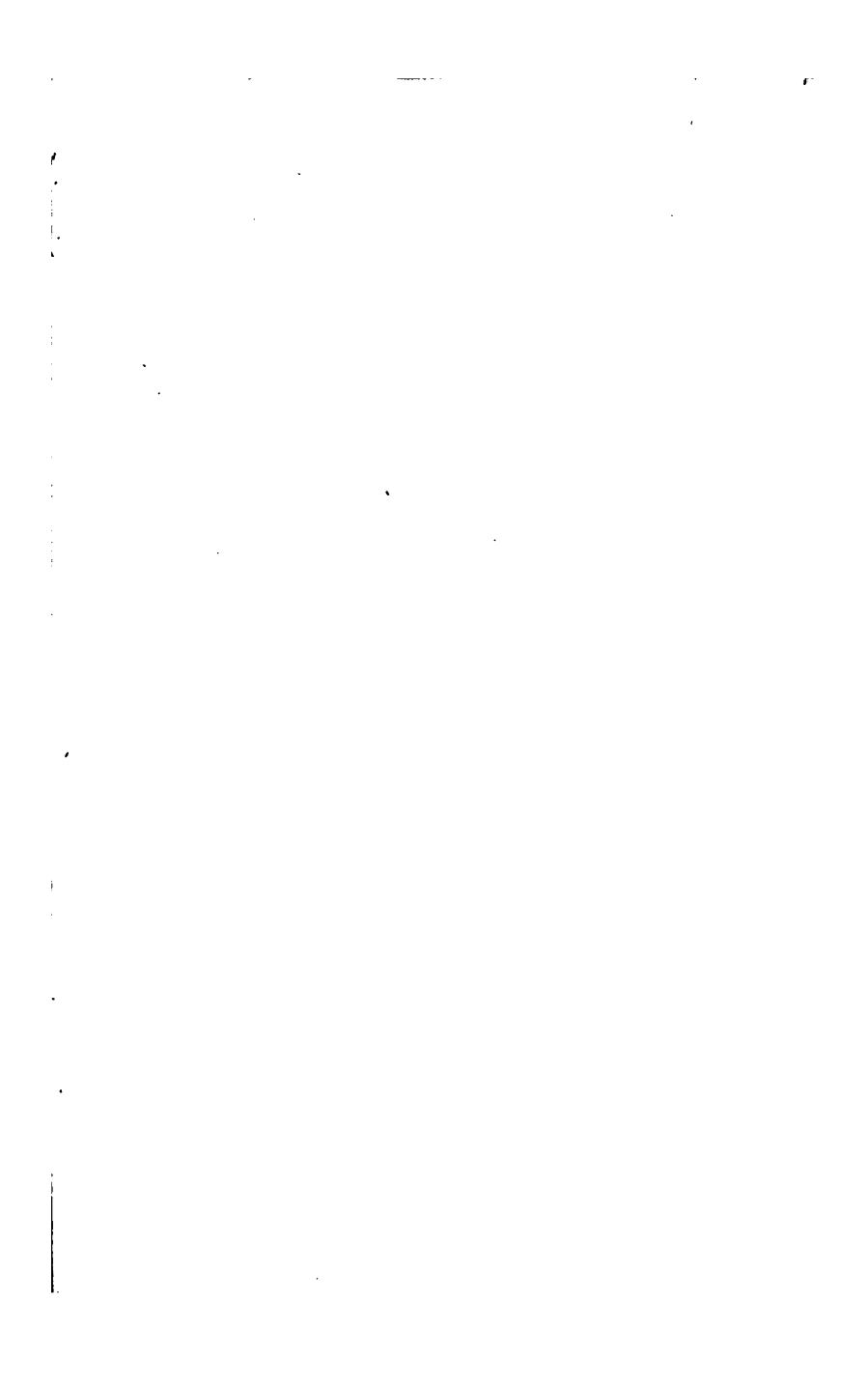


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A SHORT TREATISE
ON
THE SABBATH.

BY
A STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

GLASGOW:
PUBLISHED BY FRANCIS ORR & SONS.

MDCCCXLIX.



DEDICATED
TO
THOMAS GREIG, ESQ.,
MANCHESTER,

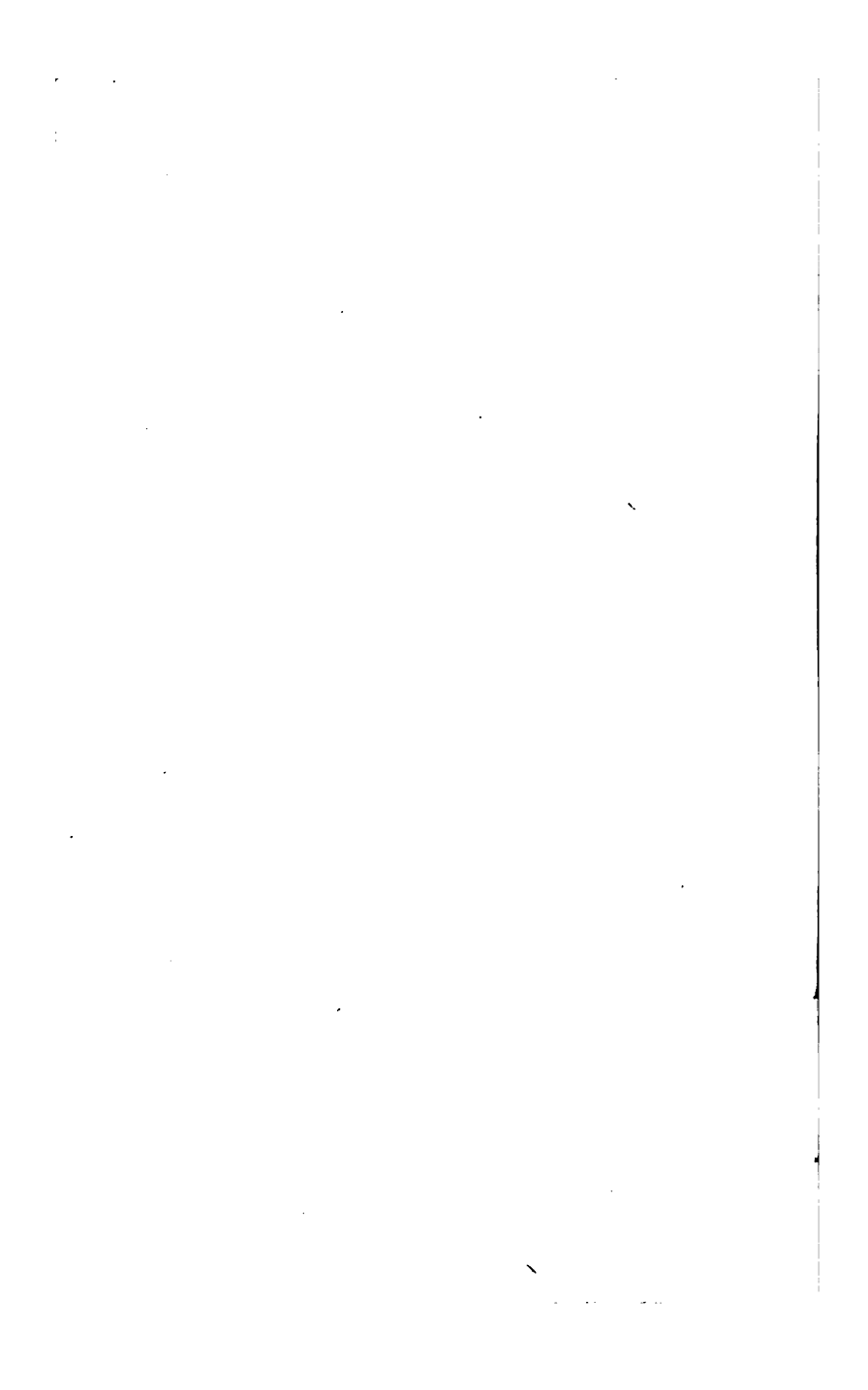
AS A TOKEN OF RESPECT AND HEARTFELT GRATITUDE,

FOR HIS UNWEARIED EXERTIONS

IN PROMOTING THE CAUSE OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE,

BY HIS SINCERE WELLWISHER,

THE AUTHOR.



A SHORT TREATISE ON THE SABBATH.

IN all well constituted and well regulated societies, there are conditions attached to them, the observing of which is essentially necessary to their present wellbeing and continued prosperity. The human race may be viewed as one great society, having conditions attached to it by the Great Author of our existence. But though certain conditions may seem to us necessary to the welfare of our material nature, we may not, perhaps, have distinct and adequate conceptions of those conditions necessary to the welfare of our moral being in this world, and to the ultimate happiness mankind may enjoy in a world to come. It will, however,

appear obvious upon reflection, that man's moral has its conditions attached to it as well as his material or physical nature; and as certain conditions are necessary for the development of the one, so in like manner are other conditions, though different in their nature, necessary for the development of the other. For the purpose of regulating man's moral nature as developed in this probationary state of being—for promoting the great end of human existence, and the consequent advancement of God's own glory, he has laid down rules and regulations, both by example and precept, for the observance of which, man as a rational, intelligent, and moral agent, must render an account. From the very constitution of the human mind, it must, in the course of its development, act in accordance with these rules which its author has laid down; and these rules in their turn must necessarily accord and be con-

sistent with the principles implanted therein. These rules are varied in their nature, to accord with the varied springs and principles of human action, and the varied scenes and circumstances of human life. Even in this present life, our rational enjoyments are in proportion to the degree in which we conform to them; could mankind do this perfectly, their happiness would be complete, and will not, until that happy period arrive. It is now, we believe, all but universally agreed among the most eminent of that profession whose duty it is to study the human frame or the physical nature of man, that cessation from the ordinary duties or avocations of life every seventh day, is not only requisite, but indispensably necessary for recruiting his physical and moral energies, and for keeping the whole system in due and proper order. But though our present subject has obviously reference to the twofold nature of

man ; and though it can be easily shewn that much of human happiness flows from the observance of the Sabbath ; yet for the present we will not consider it upon the grounds of its utility, nor urge its observance from motives of expediency, or human policy, but will attempt to prove that the observance of one day in seven is clearly laid down in holy writ, as a law of universal application, and of permanent obligation, from which it will naturally follow, that it is a principle of human duty, and is binding upon the human conscience : though it cannot properly be said that human nature is composed of any evil element, or that any evil principle is implanted therein, yet from the transgression of our federal head, and consequently the corrupted state of man, dear bought experience tells us, and heaven proclaims it, that they are susceptible of the greatest abuse ; so that human nature requires not only the guidance which

the light of reason affords, but, in addition to the law inscribed on the tablets of our hearts, a revelation of the will of God, in order that we might be guided through life in the path of duty, and at length enter upon the bliss and happiness of immortal glory.

One of the great laws of human duty which God has appointed and established, and commanded man to observe, is the observance of one day in seven, not only for recruiting his physical energies, but also for the special purpose of cultivating, by religious exercises, the higher and nobler powers of his nature, and for yielding that homage and praise due to him as our benevolent Creator, our merciful Preserver, our bountiful Benefactor, and gracious Redeemer; thus promoting his glory, and the good of our own immortal souls.

For the purpose of illustrating this duty the more clearly, and the enforcing of it the

more effectually, we proceed to shew from the word of God, the obvious moral obligation we owe to him for attending to this sacred duty ; and in doing this, we shall give a rapid sketch of the history of the Sabbath, so far as can be learned regarding it in the holy scriptures. We shall consider it at three great epochs of the world's history.

I. At the creation of the world.

II. At the period when God, through the instrumentality of Moses, delivered the children of Israel from the cruel tyranny of the Egyptians.

III. At the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, or under the Christian dispensation.

I. At the creation of the world.

The first account given of the Sabbath will be found in the 2nd chapter of Genesis, and in the 2nd and 3rd verses.—“ And on the seventh day God ended his work which he

had made ; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it ; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

No sooner did God see that all things were very good, than he instituted the Sabbath, which was to remain as an institution of universal application and of permanent obligation ; so that not only those who were the immediate descendants of Adam, but likewise those yet sleeping in uncreated dust, might enjoy the blessings such a useful and sacred institution was so well calculated to confer ; and if the Sabbath was necessary at that stage of the world's existence, when man was in a state of innocence—and lived in a state of paradasical bliss, how much more necessary is it now after sin has desolated this fair creation, and has brought upon humanity at large, the numerous ills and varied woes to which flesh

is heir, while passing through the chequered and the fleeting scenes of this probationary state. It is worthy of remark, that no command is here given for the observance of the Sabbath. These verses simply state the way in which God acted at first, but they clearly imply that man was to do the same; and as he was created after the image of God, so likewise ought to be his mode of action. In this case the proverb is perhaps illustrated, that "example is better than precept." We have God's example, and we must consequently follow it; and this example too is to be imitated by all, of whatever kindred or whatever clime—of whatever rank, character, or station in life—whether having our habitation in the humble cottage or in the towering mansion, all ranks and grades of society are morally bound to observe it; and this not only by one generation, but by all generations until time is no more, yea, until

all sublunary things shall, save immortal humanity, return to eternal annihilation; and in doing so, it not only promotes God's glory, but also our own happiness in time and throughout eternity. There is scarcely any further notice taken by the sacred penman of the Sabbath, until God, from amongst the thunderings of Sinai, puts man in remembrance of this as well as of other duties incumbent upon him to discharge as a rational and intelligent being; which, from the fall of Adam, and the consequent entrance of moral evil into this universe, and the changed relation which humanity at large bore to the great Creator, he was now wholly incapable of discharging aright, unless through divine aid.

The only portions of the Mosaic writings which may be considered as having reference to this institution during the antediluvian and patriarchal age, are the following:—Gen. viii.

10. & 12., xxix. 27, 28. There is not the slightest doubt but the holy patriarchs observed this day as a day of holy rest. Several reasons might be brought forward to account for the silence of Moses on this head, the most probable of which is, in the brief account he gives of the history of the human race, and the very important matters which he would necessarily have to relate within so narrow a compass; and also, that this duty was so well known to the immediate descendants of Adam, of Abraham, &c., as not to require to be made mention of, to the exclusion of other more interesting and important events.

II. At the period when God, through the instrumentality of Moses, delivered the children of Israel from the cruel tyranny of the Egyptians.

The first mention which Moses makes of the Sabbath during the important era of his own history, is in Exodus, xvi. 22—30.

The manner in which he makes mention of it is certainly rather remarkable. He makes mention of it, not as a new ordinance which was to be observed, but as to the manner in which it was in future to be observed, different from the former manner in some respect, which he had not noticed; for there cannot be a doubt that the people of God, from the time of Adam to Moses, had worshipped him in spirit and in truth, both in public and in private. But are we to understand from this, that it was the seventh day in regular succession from the beginning, and that it was actually upon this day that God had rested from all his works which he had made? The abrupt manner in which Moses speaks of this institution cannot easily be accounted for.

It is obvious, however, in reading the passage above referred to, that the children of Israel were very lax in their observance

of this sacred day; and it is more than propable, that when under the degrading influence of Egyptian bondage, this moral duty was wholly neglected. This would be the natural result of the degrading tyranny under which they suffered; for we shall find it to be universally true, that whenever a nation is subdued and held in bondage, from that moment moral degeneracy, as a natural consequence, is sure to follow. In a period of such profound darkness and ignorance, and of such long continuance as that during which the Israelites were under the blighting influence of slavery—a period of very nearly 430 years—we may well suppose how great the moral degeneracy of the race would be. Persecuted probably for their religious opinions, and prohibited from the due exercise of their own peculiar rites and ceremonies, what wonder that they should neglect to discharge this sacred and solemn


duty, as well as others of a like nature. Completely ignorant themselves, and assimilated in their habits to the barbarians from whose yoke they were now freed, we may well imagine the difficulties which Moses would have to encounter, in reforming their morals, and in fitting them for the proper discharge of their religious duties. Now delivered from the galling yoke of bondage, and breathing the air of liberty, God wished them to attend to those duties incumbent upon them as rational and intelligent creatures; and much more so, as being peculiarly the favoured offspring of heaven. Considering therefore the circumstances in which the Israelites were placed, we will not be so much surprised of the manner in which Moses here speaks.

And here it will be proper to inquire, is the Sabbath made mention of by Moses the seventh day in regular succession from the

beginning, or is it, as some maintain, simply the seventh day in regular succession from the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage? If the latter be the correct opinion, then the Jewish Sabbath would undoubtedly be a day simply of ceremonial rest, and those living under another dispensation would not be under a moral obligation to observe it; it then being special in its purpose, and temporary in its existence. But it is obvious that such cannot be the case, inasmuch as there was another day instituted in commemoration of this great event, viz., the feast of unleavened bread.—Exodus, xiii. 3—11.

The data from which this latter opinion is chiefly supported, is from Deut., v. 15.—“And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore

the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." But it is evident that this verse simply states an additional reason why they should observe this day, seeing the great deliverance God wrought out for them; and nothing could, in all likelihood, appeal more forcibly to the feelings of an Israelite, than reminding him of his ingratitude to God, seeing that he delivered him in such a wonderful way from such degrading tyranny. But we shall consider this passage at greater length hereafter. And here we may observe, that those who are the greatest opponents to the observance of the Sabbath, wish to shew that this institution had special reference to the Jews. As we think it of great importance to shew that the Jews did not observe the Sabbath in commemoration of their deliverance from bondage, which, were such the case, would decidedly free us from the observance of it—for this opinion shakes at the



very root of the fourth commandment, inasmuch as, it would be no longer universal in its application nor permanent as to the obligation for its observance; I will bring forward the following reasons and proofs from Scripture, to shew that the very contrary was the case, and that the Israelites did observe the Sabbath, not in commemoration of this deliverance, but because God rested on the seventh day from all his works which he had made; and although this deliverance from bondage might afford an additional motive for observing it, yet it was not in commemoration of it.

The first which we shall advance in favour of this opinion, viz., that the Israelites observed the self-same day proclaimed in paradise, will be found in Exodus, xvi. 28—30.—“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? See, for that the Lord hath given you

the Sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.' So the people rested on the seventh day." In the 28th verse there is an injunction embodied respecting the commandments of God; and it is very probable that God had from time to time given commands to the holy patriarchs of which we have no account in holy writ. The history is short, and may not inform us of many things with which the Israelites were thoroughly acquainted. The words, "how long," imply a time of long duration. From this we may infer that they knew these laws and commandments long before now. In the 29th verse it is said that the Lord gave them the Sabbath. From this we may obviously infer that the law of the Sabbath was known to the Israelites prior to the formal promulgation of the de-

calogue ; and further, that these very words evidently allude to that very Sabbath proclaimed in paradise. We have no account of the Lord having given any other than the day which he sanctified at the dawn of creation ; neither is there any account in any other former part of the Mosaic writings, that God gave any other Sabbath than that which he gave at the beginning of the world.

The second proof in support of this is from the fourth commandment. “ Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work : but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God : in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and “rested” the seventh day : wherefore the

Lord "blessed" the Sabbath-day, and "hallowed it." The very first word, "remember," implies that this day was formerly instituted; for if not, why or how could they be put in remembrance of a thing not formerly in existence? The latter portion of this commandment particularly, has a reference to the day on which God rested; and here you may observe the reason why it was instituted. He made the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh. He "rested," he "blessed," he "hallowed it" when all things were created by him, and when he saw that all these were very good. Now let it be remembered that the commandments were given as a written code of morals after the deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage. If it was in commemoration of that deliverance from bondage, God never would have assigned "his own resting on the seventh day" as the reason for their keeping

it, seeing that he himself had written this commandment after that deliverance had taken place; so that the latter part of this commandment sets the matter indisputably at rest, that the Sabbath was not observed by the Israelites in commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but in consequence of its being instituted at the beginning.

The third may be taken from Exodus, xxxi. 17.—“It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.” In this verse there is obviously an additional proof that the Sabbath was to be kept for no other purpose, and in commemoration of no other event than that for which we contend.

In considering the decalogue, we must keep in remembrance the changed relation which man bears to God from that which he bore to

him when the Sabbath was at first instituted. At that time man was in a state of innocence; but now by nature a child of wrath, an heir of eternal woe, banished from the presence of God, and from holding any communion with him. In a state of moral purity we find God giving no written code of laws to man in reference to his mode of action; but now he bears a different relation to him, and consequently we find God acting in a different manner to man in a state of moral depravity. His mode of dealing with him is just in accordance with this changed relation. Formerly he held communion with God, yielding him perfect obedience in all his doings—example was sufficient; but here we now find God, as it were, acting more harshly towards him. The stern command is now issued forth, “Verily ye shall keep my Sabbaths;” which implies that man was not to use his own discretion in the matter; it was

an imperative duty. We have no account of any written code of laws prior to the promulgation of the decalogue; at all events it is quite evident no such thing was done while man was in his state of innocence; but now the altered relation which he bore to God, made this indispensably necessary. Human nature became at one time so debased and so degraded, that God saw fit to destroy the human race from off the face of the earth, by sending a deluge to sweep them away; but he had now a covenanted people, whom he wished to raise in the scale of moral and intellectual being, and fit them not only for the discharge of their duties while in a probationary state, but also for holding communion with him in a higher and more lasting stage of existence; and thus make them, through the blood of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, fit not only for enjoying the advantages and blessings

of the temporary Sabbath below, but also for the joys of the eternal Sabbath above.

And here it may be proper to make a few remarks on the laws of the Israelites, before entering strictly on the consideration of the decalogue. These laws may be classified as follows :—

1. Moral.

2. Ceremonial or religious.

3. Civil.

1. The moral law was to remain for ever unchanged; being immutable in its nature, and being founded upon, and made to accord with the moral nature of man. It arises from the very nature and condition of things, and can never be altered. This law is briefly comprehended in the decalogue. 2. The ceremonial law might be changed. It was promulgated simply as a temporary enactment, and might be changed at the will of the Lawgiver, it being designed for a special and temporary

purpose. When the end was gained, it was no longer necessary to use the means through which that end was accomplished. The sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus Christ put an end to all these Jewish ceremonies. Rom. x. 4.—“For Christ is the end of the ‘*ceremonial*’ law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” 3. The civil law is also changeable in its nature, and depends upon the progress of human intelligence, and the development of human institutions. But the moral law is quite different: it is as immutable in its nature as the great and infallible Legislator who has enacted it. It is the means; the end is the reformation and ultimate perfection of humanity; so that it must be of equal co-existence with the human race.

We will now shortly consider a few specious arguments evidently adduced to strike at the root of the decalogue as a brief embodiment

of the moral code, and especially against the universality of the law of the Sabbath and the permanence of the obligation to observe it. The first and most ingenious argument which has come under our notice in support of the opinion that the Sabbath was instituted primarily as a day of ceremonial rest under the Jewish economy, is, that it was instituted in consequence, and in commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Could this be satisfactorily proved to be the case, it would undoubtedly set the question at rest; and I can see no reason why we, who are under the Christian dispensation, should pay any regard to the fourth commandment. If such were the case, it would be useless to bring it forward as a proof that Christians are morally bound to observe this day. But we think that it has been satisfactorily shewn in a former part of this short treatise that such is not the case.

The next argument of any weight advanced to shew that the Sabbath of the decalogue is a day simply of ceremonial rest, and belonging to a different dispensation, is from the fifth commandment.—“Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” We well remember when the last clause of this commandment was brought forward by an eminent Scottish divine, as an argument that the decalogue had special reference to the Jews; inasmuch as the land here mentioned, bears obvious reference to the land of Canaan. We honestly confess that it had, at the time, a powerful influence over our own mind; and had we not investigated the matter further, was almost ready to say with a celebrated living divine, “to look for any authority for the observance of the Sabbath out of the bosom of the church, is to seek for the living among the dead.” But after further

inquiry, we found how apt we were to be led into error. Without making a single remark, let the Apostle Paul be our interpreter and our guide in the answer to this objection. Eph. vi. 1—3,—“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.”

The third argument advanced on this head is from Col. ii. 16, 17.—“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the Sabbath-days; which are a shadow of things to come: but the body is of Christ.” This passage has been often advanced as a weighty argument against the observance of the Sabbath, which, it is said, proves beyond doubt the ceremonial nature of this day under the Christian dispensation, seeing that

the great Apostle of the Gentiles classifies it with other holy-days ; but on carefully reading over the context, and on considering it in reference to other portions of holy writ, it will be seen that the Apostle here means that they were no longer to be judged (words implying that they were no longer under a moral obligation) in observing the ceremonies peculiar to the Jewish or seventh-day Sabbath, and has no reference whatever to the moral and religious duties of the Christian Sabbath.

The fourth argument is taken from the words of our Saviour as recorded in the gospel of St. Mark, " That the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The truth of this is evident, for if there were no such a being as man in this world, according to its present constitution, so far as human penetration can go, we can see no use for such an institution ; but man might

be so constituted as not to require a Sabbath. That the Sabbath was, therefore, made for man is perfectly obvious; but it was not made for man to desecrate; it was not made for amusement; it was not made for railway traffic, mercantile transactions, nor for any other worldly affair. It was made for MAN HIMSELF, observe, and for no other thing. It was made that he might rest from his toils, and that he might have an opportunity to worship, to praise, and to glorify his great Creator and merciful Redeemer. Instead of this passage favouring the cause of the Anti-Sabbitarians, it militates most powerfully against them; and in it we may trace the wonderful and mysterious providence of God, who foreseeing "man's inhumanity to man," how merciless masters and cruel tyrants would make the lives of those under them one continued scene of toil, made this kind provision, especially for

the poor, and them who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. Labouring classes, it is to Heaven that you are indebted for this hallowed day, and what Heaven gave you, designing men, under the pretext of being your friends, would rob you of Heaven's most precious boon to man.

The fifth argument may be stated thus:—
How can the Sabbath be kept all over the world, for when it is mid-day at Palestine it is midnight at other quarters of the world? The Jews kept their Sabbath from sunset on Friday evening, to sunset on Saturday evening; Christians from twelve o'clock on Saturday night, to twelve on Sunday night. To the above objection it has been answered, "it is not so much a particular as a seventh portion of time that we are to observe;" but this answer is hardly satisfactory, as it may be said in reply, if it be the seventh portion of time only that we are to observe without any

particular reference to any other thing, why not any other day as well as the first or seventh day of the week? In answering this argument we shall consider two things. 1. The world is constituted not in accordance with the will of man, but that of the Deity. It has pleased him so to constitute it, that while it would be darkness in the one place, it should be noonday light in another; still the command to keep the Sabbath applies to all—how then can all keep it? God never tells us to perform impossibilities; and as the constitution of the world is such as to preclude the possibility of observing the Sabbath-day at the same moment of time all over the world, we must act in accordance with the circumstances of this constitution. But to put our argument in a clearer light, let us illustrate it by example. In Palestine it is twelve o'clock, noon, when it is about midnight in the West Indies. The resurrection

of our Lord took place in Palestine, and every seventh day after this event was to be the Christian Sabbath. In the West Indies, they calculate the seventh day from this event also; and if the constitution of the world be such as to make it impossible to reckon as to the same moment of time; in answer, it was the will of God that it should be so, and we have no control over it—nay, but for this, and there would be intervals of time, when no praise would ascend from the earth, to the God of Heaven. The objection is therefore perfectly futile, and cannot in the least degree do away with the universality of the law of the Sabbath. 2. Any believer in revelation cannot deny that the Jews under the old dispensation were under a moral obligation to observe the seventh day Sabbath. How did this argument apply in their case? Supposing some of them were in other quarters of the world, this would apply

to them also. They did not keep the same moment of time as their brethren did in Palestine, but reckoned time according to the latitude and longitude of the country in which they resided, and do it till this very day. This argument has not even the merit of honesty—its absurdity is too glaring to deceive any reflecting man—it is a mere quibble emanating from an infidel mind.

The next place where particular mention is made of the Sabbath, is in Exodus, xxxi. 12—17. In the 13th verse you will observe that one reason, among others, brought forward for the observance of this day, is that it is to be a sign between the Lord and the children of Israel throughout their generations, that they may know that he is the Lord that doth sanctify them; or, in other words, that they are his peculiar people, and he their only God. In like manner is the case with Christians. It is a sign between

Christ and his covenanted people, that he is their God and only Saviour, and they his people, whom he has purchased with his blood; and that it is he who, by his Holy Spirit, doth sanctify them and has given them this Sabbath upon earth, as a type of the eternal Sabbath in heaven. It may seem somewhat wonderful that more frequent reference is not made to this holy institution in the historical and prophetic writings of the Jewish writers; but this may serve to lessen our surprise respecting the same thing prior to the promulgation of the decalogue. It will be found that reference is made in the following places to this institution. Lev. xxiii. 3; Deut. v. 12—14; Num. xv. 32—36; Josh. xxiv. 15; 2 Sam. vi. 20; Neh. x. 31, & xiii. 15—23; Job, i. v; Psalm, xcii. 1, 2; Isaiah, lviii. 13, 14, & lxvi. 23, & lvi. 6, 7; Jer. xvii. 21, 22, 24, 27, & x. 25; Ezek. xx. 12—21, & xxii. 26; Amos, viii. 5.

III. We now come to consider it at the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, or under the Christian dispensation.

The first place where it is mentioned in the New Testament, is in Matt. xii. 1—12.—“ At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, ‘ Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-day.’ But he said unto them, ‘ Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And

they asked him, saying, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?' that they might accuse him. And he said unto them, 'What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-days.' " It is very curious that the Jewish civil law allowed what was here done; so that they were not amenable for this action to the laws of their country. The only thing that could be found fault with was the violation of the sanctity of the Sabbath; and here, in order to answer this objection, our Saviour brings forward a parallel instance from their own history, which happened in the case of one revered by every one of the Jewish race, and perhaps the greatest name of which that nation could boast. In the second case here noticed, in which the Pharisees found fault

with our Saviour's doings on the Sabbath, as they wished to keep this day in accordance with the letter of the law, our Saviour taught them they were rather to keep it in accordance with the intent or spirit of the law: and here was the great principle established which accords so well with the spirit of the fourth commandment, viz., that works of necessity and mercy may be done on that day. The best of institutions may, and often are abused. This naturally arises from the imperfection of humanity. For to rectify the opinions of men, and give them a right view of matters, was one reason among others for which the Son of God came into the world; and here we find him fulfilling one great object of his mission. It will be unnecessary to inquire at any great length as to the manner in which our Saviour kept the Sabbath, the seventh day being the proper Sabbath, until such times as he should express

the solemn words, "It is finished;" when the light of a new dispensation would dawn in upon a benighted world; we find him, however, observing this day faithfully during his eventful career upon earth.—Luke, xiv. 10, &c.

In answering the question, is man under a moral obligation to observe one day in seven? we shall notice,

1. The day which the apostles kept.
2. The manner in which they kept it.
3. The reason why they kept it.
4. What constitutes the ceremonial, what the moral observance of this day.
5. Which day are Christians morally bound to observe.

1. The day which the apostles kept.

The scriptures do not inform us clearly of the great change which we as Christians maintain has taken place with regard to the Sabbath; yet, upon calm reflection and close investigation, we think it will be found that

such a change has really taken place. We are told in Deut. xviii. 15, 16, that a change was to take place in the mode of worship.—“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not,’” This prophet would have been useless if the laws were to continue unaltered; inasmuch as there would be no necessity of hearing from that prophet what they were already acquainted with. Saint Peter quotes the exact words of Moses, Acts, iii. 22, 23. And again, God formed them a new covenant, Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. But what convinces us that it is the first day of the week that we are to observe, is the example of the apostles,

Acts, xiii. 42, & xvi. 13, & xviii. 4, & xx. 7; St. John, xx. 19; Rev. i. 10; & Heb. x. 25; and 1 Cor. xvi. 2; which clearly proves the change from the seventh to the first day of the week.

2. The manner in which they kept it.

And here again we must make reference to the Acts of the Apostles, xiii. 42, xvi. 13, xviii. 4, & xx. 6, 7. We shall here find that they read and expounded the Scriptures upon that day; in short, they were engaged in religious exercises; and although, from the period in which the apostles lived, it was necessary, in order to evangelize the heathen, to be engaged in these solemn and sacred duties upon other days of the week, yet we find this day particularly mentioned as a day of religious worship, and that the apostles were accordingly engaged upon that day, from which they must necessarily have abstained from all secular affairs, and if a man attends

to his religious duties on the Sabbath, solemnly and faithfully, we think there is little danger of his openly violating its sanctity.

3. The reason why they kept it.

And here we may inquire, 1st, have they observed it because of its institution in paradise? 2nd, have they observed it by reason or in consequence of their race being delivered from Egyptian bondage? and, 3rd, have they observed it in honour of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

Some maintain that the antediluvians, and all down to the Mosaic age, observed the Sabbath in commemoration of the creation of the world, inasmuch as God rested upon that day from all the works which he had made; and that those posterior to the deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and previous to the resurrection of Christ, observed it in commemoration of that deliverance; and, lastly, that those under the

Christian dispensation observe it in honour of the resurrection of Christ, it being from that time constantly called the Lord's day. We agree with this opinion so far as the antediluvians and those prior to the Mosaic age are concerned, but can hardly agree with the second, which opinion, we think, is mainly founded upon Deut. v. 15.—

“ And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence with a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm : therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.” The Jews, it is said, observed their Sabbath in commemoration of a great deliverance from bondage ; but in this passage we can find no grounds to form such an opinion, and especially when brought in opposition to other passages of scripture subversive and contradictory of it. In this verse we can find nothing more than

an additional reason why the Israelites should observe this hallowed day. God delivered them from bondage, and now they were bound in return to attend to the commands of Jehovah. And in following out this view it is further said, that the Christian observes the Sabbath in remembrance of his great deliverance from bondage, Christ having "led captivity captive," and delivered him from his enemy.—Eph. ix. 8. We should rather be inclined to entertain another idea in reference to this, which may possibly be incorrect. Jesus Christ was the person of the Godhead who created the world.—John, i. 1, 2. As he rested when he created a world, might he not have equally rested when he saved a world?—Heb. iv. 10: "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Let us remember that we observe the Sabbath in memory of the works of one

and the same person; for it is he who created the world, who saved the world from everlasting perdition: so that the antediluvian, the Jew, and the Christian, observed the Sabbath in commemoration of what one and the same individual person had done. If the Sabbath was observed by the Israelites in commemoration of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, why was the feast of unleavened bread observed for the same purpose? Was one day not sufficient? Does not such a supposition remove the moral nature of the Sabbath? No such objection can be urged against our view of the matter, which is simply this, that our Lord having acted at different periods of the world's existence in matters perhaps of equal importance, viz., the creation and salvation of the world; and though the accomplishment of these events happened on different days, yet there is no difference in the moral duty, it being required

only to discharge it at different times, and in relation to different circumstances. We cannot help thinking, therefore, that we ought to look to the example set in paradise for the obligation to perform this duty, the renewal of which took place from among the awful sublimities of Sinai; and the only difference between those who lived under other dispensations and us Christians in the discharge of this duty, is simply in reference to time and to religious ceremonies; this necessarily arising from altered circumstances, and the forms and modes of worship being different under the two dispensations.

4. What constitutes the moral, what the ceremonial part of the Sabbath.

There is no doubt some difficulty in drawing a line of demarcation between what is moral and what is ceremonial. Few, we think, if any, will maintain that Christians are morally bound to observe the ceremonial

portion of the Sabbath, or in other words, the ceremonies peculiar to the Jewish church, which were the shadow of things to come. Having now the substance, the shadow has consequently fled. And here it will be proper to enquire, is the fourth commandment, or any part of it, of a ceremonial nature?

1. "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God:

2. "In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

3. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it."

It may be observed, that the first part of

this commandment is of a positive nature, the second prohibitory, and the latter adducing a reason why the positive and prohibitory portions were to be attended to. It may also be observed, that most of the other commandments are prohibitory; but this arises from the fact, that they are not speaking in reference to duties to be discharged, but evils to be avoided. The first part of this commandment refers to the religious duties to be discharged on that day. The second, to duties to be avoided, the performance of which is quite legitimate on other days. The third and last part, to the reason why this day is selected for such a purpose. Is there anything ceremonial in this? We think not. The first portion is of a general nature, and applies to the Christian under the new, as it did to the Jew under the old dispensation. The Jew kept it holy when he worshipped God in accordance with the

peculiar rites and ceremonies of his religion.

The Christian keeps it holy when he worships God in accordance with the ceremonies or modes of worship, which the Author of his religion has instituted in that church which he has established upon earth.

It is a very great mistake to suppose that a man keeps the Sabbath-day holy when he ceases to perform the ordinary duties of life. A man may "not do any work," in the evident import of the term, upon that day, and still not remember to keep it holy. The second or prohibitory portion of this commandment is not, we think, ceremonial. A ceremony, in the common acceptance of the term, is a religious rite. We certainly find no such thing here. In attending to the prohibitory portion of this commandment, it is not so much the discharge, as the avoidance of a dereliction of duty, we are attending to; we are not so much keeping a commandment

as avoiding to break one; we are not so much doing a moral action as avoiding to do an immoral one: the one is a positive, the other a negative duty, though equally involving responsibility; in short, the prohibitory duty is simply a necessary condition to the proper discharge of the positive; for how can a man keep the Sabbath-day holy if he does not abandon the ordinary duties to be discharged on the other days of the week? "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," is what actually constitutes the fourth commandment; the following portion being merely an enumeration of conditions for the due discharge of it, also reasons for establishing this as one of the moral duties of man. In no part of this commandment can we find anything of a ceremonial nature. But that which is ceremonial, may in a sense be moral also. Thus the Jews under the old dispensation were morally bound to observe the rites

and ceremonies of their religion ; Christians are not. Christians are morally bound to observe the rites and ceremonies of their own religion ; the Jews were not. So that " Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," would be to a Jew under the old dispensation, " Worship God, on that day, according to the peculiar rites of your faith ;" to a Christian, " Worship God according to the forms which Christ ordained in his church upon earth." A Jew was morally bound to keep the fourth commandment, the positive part of which obviously embodies the injunction with respect to the worshipping of God according to the ceremonies of his religion. The Christian is also morally bound to keep the fourth commandment, the positive part of which as obviously embodies the injunction with respect to the worshipping of God according to the forms of his own religious worship. The prohibitory portion embody-

ing simply the conditions necessary for the due discharge of the positive. Yet a rather curious distinction has been attempted to be drawn between what is moral and what is ceremonial. The moral part is said to consist simply in this, viz., the setting apart a certain portion of each Sabbath for the purpose of assembling ourselves together in some place, in order to praise God for the blessings which he is continually pouring down upon us with such liberal hand.—Heb. x. 25. But this is simply complying with the first part of the fourth commandment. It is only discharging the religious duty—it is not complying with the second or prohibitory portion, or, what may be termed the moral part of this commandment; and though a Christian will, undoubtedly look upon all duties in the same light, yet, for the sake of distinction, we may use the terms moral and religious duties.

5. Which day are Christians morally bound to observe ?

Having briefly examined the various arguments brought forward against the observance of the Lord's day, we shall now sum up the evidence in favour of keeping it.

1. We find that this day was instituted in paradise, and consequently the law of the Sabbath is of universal application, and of permanent obligation, Gen. ii. 2, 3.

2. That this or any other statute enacted by the great Lawgiver, at the beginning of the world, was not yet repealed by divine authority, from which we learn that they bear the impress of universality, and of permanent duration.

3. That this institution was modified at two particular periods of the world's existence, to suit the legal and christian dispensations.

4. That the laws of the decalogue are of a moral and not of a ceremonial nature, that

they consequently apply to the Christian under the new, as they did to the Jew under the old dispensation; and that as the fourth commandment forms an integral portion of the decalogue, what is binding in whole must be binding in part.

5. We find that the Apostles of our Lord, and the primitive Christians, observed the first day of the week; that the former read, expounded the scriptures, and dispensed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper upon that day:—St. John xx. 19; 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10; Acts xx. 7; Heb. x. 25.

6. That there is no evidence from Scripture that the Apostles dispensed the ordinance of the Lord's supper, after the resurrection, upon any other day of the week.

7. That there is ample evidence of the Sabbath being changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, 1 Cor. xvi. 2; if this be not sufficient to convince any unpre-

judiced man, that he is to keep this day holy, we know not what can.

The advantages to be derived from this institution may be classified under the following general heads:—

1. Physical.

From the brief nature of this work, and the contracted space within which we must necessarily convey our ideas, it will be impossible to quote the opinions of high medical authorities in reference to the physical advantages of this sacred institution; suffice it to say, that the very highest medical authorities have given it as their opinion, that no other portion is so well adapted as the seventh portion of time for the relaxation of the human body, from the ordinary duties of life. Such is the structure of the human frame, that no other stated interval of rest so well accords with it; and it is more than probable that six hours per day ought to be the

maximum of human labour, were the formation of human society upon a proper basis, and each member to have a due share in the toils and labours of the community at large. Seeing therefore that the very structure of our frame, the very constitution of our being, accords so well with this hallowed institution, it surely ought to be our greatest care and highest ambition duly to observe it.

2. Intellectual.

The Sabbath-day affords a valuable opportunity to those especially who are engaged throughout the week, for intellectual improvement. Seeing the stores of valuable information open to them on every hand, the excellent books they may read, and which abounds so much in the English language, above all, the word of God, that volume in which is written the words of eternal life, in which is to be found that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation ; in this way they

may acquire much information, and thus make good use of the talents which God has given them, so that they may render unto our Lord when he cometh, his own, with usury.

3. Moral.

While in the probationary stage of this life, while in this circumscribed sphere of being and of action, we ought always to advance in moral purity, we should daily become more assimilated in our nature to him in whose image we were created; and in order to this, how unspeakable the advantage of a Sabbath! On other days of the week we are perhaps wholly engaged in the active duties of life; but on this day we have an invaluable opportunity to advance in moral virtue, and to aspire at what ought to be one of the highest objects of human ambition, and that is moral greatness.

4. Religious.

We now come to the highest point in the

climax. We may pursue after the pleasures and enjoyments of life, we may aspire at intellectual greatness, and be desirous of being ranked among them whose names will ever blaze on the roll of fame, and thus be handed down to an admiring posterity, as men possessed of brilliant talents, or heroic spirits, the productions of whose genius, or the fame of whose achievements, is a theme of universal praise; but no man can be truly morally great, who is not possessed of true religion in the soul, whose whole mind is not permeated by the divine element of faith, whose confidence is not on the Rock of Ages, whose belief is not in the Son of God. He may be eloquent; he may make strong and powerful appeals to the sensibility of our nature; he may, by his splendid talents, sway our minds and influence our hearts; he may stand high in the intellectual world; he may penetrate farther in to the mysteries of

being than any one else, and from the deep recesses of mental or material nature, bring new and hidden truths to light, and throw open fields for philosophic and scientific investigations; he may devote his whole life to works of charity, and endeavour to raise man in the scale of moral and intellectual existence; he may be prompted with the purest motives that actuate unregenerate humanity; his whole life may be, according to the human standard, blameless—it may meet with universal approbation, and still come far short of the divine requirements. However good these things may be in themselves, the aims, objects, and motives, are all worldly—they have nothing higher in view. The young man of whom mention is made in the Gospel, perhaps came up to all human requirements, yet the Saviour said there was something still wanting. Divine love did not kindle the flame of heavenly devotion in the

soul—it was not yet filled with breathings and aspirations of a heavenward tendency; the good deeds done in life were not through love to him who first loved us, and gave himself for us, but from a desire to receive the applause and approbation of the world. Say, traveller on thy way to Zion, through the desert of life, is not the hallowed influence of this sacred day—to thee a day of refreshing from on high—a day wherein thy faith is strongest, and thy hope is brightest—say, is not this day above all others that on which thou seest, by the eye of faith, the sky clear and cloudless, the scene most pleasing, and the prospect most gladdening, whither thou art only as yet in the commencement of thy journey, with the beams of the morning sun shining on thy path, or under the lustre of its noonday splendours, or art now amidst the gilded rays of a protracted and setting sunshine? Wilt thou then part with this hallowed

day? will infidel hands wrest it from thy grasp? wilt thou let loose thy hold without a struggle, and allow it to be banished to its native skies? Heaven forbid! Hold fast by thy Christian liberty, and no power under heaven will wrest it from thee, until its purpose is fulfilled and its end accomplished; yea, until the temporal is merged in the eternal Sabbath, and all they whose sins are washed away in the blood of the Lamb, no longer join in unison to worship God in temples made with hands, but now raised on high, swell the joyful chorus, and sing in raptured strains, heavenly anthems, to him that died for them, and washed them in his blood.

